

REMARKS

The foregoing identical amendments in independent claims 1, 16 and 17 respond to the Section 112, second paragraph, rejection of claims 1-18 as indefinite regarding the selected detail settings. In particular, the final paragraph of each of these claims, defining the "display control means," provides a clearer statement of the invention. The control means pops up on the display section one of the detail settings when the associated detail setting key of one of the plurality of jobs is selected. The new claim language, "the detail setting key is associated with one of the plurality of jobs," describes the situation where a job with which a detail setting key is associated may be any one of the jobs (jobs being processed, stand-by jobs, or jobs that are newly added) that are executable by the claimed apparatus. Applicants believe that the claims as amended are definite, and overcome the Section 112 rejection.

Claim 5 is cancelled. In claim 6, line 4, "at least" is deleted to be consistent with the cancellation of claim 5 and more clearly distinguish over the cited art.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claims 1-4, 9, 12-14 and 16-18 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as fully anticipated by U.S. Published Application No. 2002/0048035 to Beaudet et al. ("Beaudet").

The Examiner cites mainly paragraphs 0040 and 0041 and Figures 4D and 4E as disclosing the claimed features. Paragraph 0008 is cited for running plural jobs and interrupting one to run another.

Beaudet describes an apparatus that operates as either a copier (with scanned hard copy input) or a printer (with rasterized electronic data input). The purpose of Beaudet is to manage the use of the apparatus in an efficient way given that two sources of input both use the same "marking engine" to reproduce the information on copy sheets. The Beaudet solution centers on a "control means" that controls which information is reproduced, in part, in response to "a signal representing a time of day." Paragraphs 43 and 44 describe the overall operation of the Beaudet apparatus.

The Beaudet apparatus is not simply a photocopier, as with the present invention. As a corollary, while Beaudet describes interrupting a printer job during certain hours of the day to run a copy job, it does not interrupt one copy job to run another copy job which can have different detail settings. The fundamental problems addressed by Beaudet and the present invention are therefore different.

In Beaudet there is a soft interrupt key for a print job that is being run. Fig. 4C shows the control panel display with this key. The operator can then set up and run the copy job. This is apparently done using controls not shown as soft keys in Fig. 4, e.g. the hard keys 41. In particular, Applicants do not see an indication that any of Figs. 4A-4K display copy detail settings with pop-up detail settings, as required by all of the pending claims. Nor do they find any Beaudet display where an interrupt button is displayed together with pop-up detail settings so that an operator may be confused as to whether the pop-up details relate to a copy job being run, or a stand-by job.

The Beaudet sequential screens 4A-4K are closer in function to the sequential screens of the Mizuno reference in the prior Action than the LCD display of the present invention. Moreover, Beaudet has no detail settings in a pop-up display together with an interrupt key, so the problem of confusion as to what job is being run is not present.

A feature of the present invention relates to accepting a key operation to give an instruction to interrupt, during processing of image data that is accepted, the processing of that image data in order to carry out processing on new different image data that is supplied. With the present invention, the display state is changed in a predetermined state to allow an operator to understand that the "interruption key" is not operable.

In contrast, Beaudet describes an "interrupt print job key" that causes a precedent print job to be interrupted so that a print job accepted via a network is allowed to be processed in the print section (paragraph [0040]). Beaudet also describes that no operation is accepted via the "interrupt print job key", using the job processing time and the number of jobs as bases for judgment (paragraph [0041]).

Beaudet also describes that, when the "interrupt print job key" is pressed so that the apparatus is in a standby mode, while reading from the scanner is possible, the "interrupt print job key" disappears from the screen and a different key appears (paragraph [0041]).

In direct contrast, the point of the present invention is that when the detail setting of the processing mode is carried out on the device via the operational panel, the display state of the "interruption key" is changed (e.g. grayout) so that no operation is accepted. Thus, the present application differs from Beaudet, where the display of the "interrupt print job key" is changed to a completely different "key," and an operational instruction via the "interrupt print job key" is sometimes not accepted in a manner that depends on the processing status of the job (paragraph [0040]).

In the present claimed invention, the display state is changed while the "interruption key" is kept displayed on the display section. This allows an operator to confirm anytime the presence of the "interruption key." The display state is changed when the operator is likely to be confused in regard to the operation, for example when the operator is carrying out the detail setting of the processing mode. This enables the operator to understand that the "interruption key" is not available to be used (not selectable). Beaudet provides no teaching on these points.

Applicants also respectfully traverse the rejection under 35 USC Section 103(a) of claims 7, 8, 10, 11 and 15 as obvious over Beaudet when combined with Japanese Publication 03175065 to Sato et al. (claims 7, 8), U.S. Published Application No. 2002/0050996 to Hirayami (claims 10 and 11) or U.S. Patent No. 6,385,412 to Sadakumi (claim 5). While these secondary, in the combinations detailed in the Action, show isolated features, they do not supply the deficiencies noted above with respect to Beaudet.

In view of the foregoing amendments and Remarks, Applicants believe that the pending amended claims are clearly allowable over the art of record, whether considered alone or in any combination, and that this application is otherwise in condition for allowance.

Dated: December 12, 2007

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